

**2016 Annual Report**  
**Building Standards Division**

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**City Mission:**

To partner with our community to *deliver* services, conserve resources, *protect* the quality of life, and *plan* for the future. We will endeavor to accomplish this mission in the most efficient and fiscally responsible manner possible, and in accordance to the core values listed below.

**Building Standards Division Mission:**

To *protect* the public from hazards incidental to the design, erection, repair, demolition or use and occupancy of all buildings or structures and to ensure the safe and sanitary maintenance of existing buildings using effective code enforcement while providing open communication, courtesy and respect.

**Citywide Core Values  
supported by the Division:**

- Accountability
- Continuous Improvement,
- Concern for our Shared Environment
- Honesty & Integrity
- Respect
- Safety
- Trust

## **Building Standards Division Staff:**

*“What motivates the staff is the realization that building safety is something vital to all who work in buildings, send their kids to school or shop at the local grocery store – we often just take building safety for granted.”*

Tim Monea

Chief Building Official  
Floodplain Administrator

Carla Jesse

Administrative Assistant  
Building Standards Division  
Planning and Zoning Division

Kim Fahrni

Electrical Inspector  
Commercial Building Inspector

Scott Davis

Plumbing and HVAC Inspector  
Backflow Valve Program Coordinator

Mark Nussbaum

Building Inspector  
Zoning Inspector

Justin Reed

Property Maintenance Inspector  
Zoning Inspector

## **Significant 2016 Accomplishments**

- Began the transition to a “paperless” office with the configuration of a cloud based permit system. Set up and configured over 40 applications to an online process.
- Assisted the Wayne County Commissioners with interviews and the selection of a new County Chief Building Official
- Represented the mayor serving on the Community Action Wayne Medina board of directors and served as a member of the Housing Coalition, the Housing Advisory Committee, the Main Street economic development committee, and the employee engagement committee.
- Assisted various building owners/tenants resolve code issues or move projects forward by working with them at the jobsite: Applebees, Spoon Market, St. Paul Hotel, Sun Rise Hotels, Frito-Lay, Wayne County Historical Society, Enviroclean, LUK, Wayne/Holmes Independent Living, GOJO Industries, Buckeye Agricultural Museum Board, Wooster City School District (Door Lockdown issues with ALICE training resolved, Edgewood projects, locker rooms), Oak Grove Eatery, House of Iron Gym, Wooster Fit/Planet Fitness, NAMI facility expansion, Artiflex, College of Wooster (campus fire alarm issues, Brush Hall and new life science center), Danbury of Wooster, Cowhaus Creamery, West Hill Baptist Church day care, Northpointe Church relocation, Wooster YMCA gymnastics facility, 180 recovery houses, Goodwill, Wooster Area Chamber of Commerce, H2 wine bar.

- Hosted the following cities searching for best practices regarding code enforcement, downtown rehabilitation of buildings and/or improved customer service: Steubenville, Mansfield, Upper Arlington and Hudson.
- Presented the Building Standards Division to the Citizens Government Leadership Academy.
- Assisted in the development of the plans for the former Larwill Trailer Park site, the Freedlander Chalet and the downtown quadrant and alley improvements.
- Met with stakeholders to improve Prosecution by Wayne County prosecutor's office.
- Developed joint meeting with local code officials and the local Homebuilders Association to provide HBA members with code updates and education.

## **Significant Prior Accomplishments**

- Managed Larwill Trailer Park clean-up project. Also assisted with the relocation of all residents to improved housing by working with the housing coalition and WMHA.
- Managed the project to transfer the administration of the City's backflow valve testing program from a paper system to an on-line system. This includes the online registration for tester certification and recording of mandatory annual tests. The City has over 1200 registered valves.
- Worked with Cleveland State University School for Professional Studies to streamline the plan review process. Used software updates and concurrent plan reviews to reduce the average review time to 21 days for complex projects.
- Began large format scanning and electronic archiving of all commercial plans since 2002.
- Developed "mutual consent" appeal process for commercial building code appeals for downtown businesses.
- Developed system of updating and coordinating all lot information and address information with the Wayne County Auditor's records. This allows accurate identification of current owners, lot/parcel information and addresses.
- During 2002-2005 initiated the discontinuance of the citywide "radio alarm box" fire alarm systems. These were unreliable and non-code compliant. This resulted in 220 commercial buildings upgrading to code compliant fire alarm systems and the City no longer monitoring fire alarm systems with outdated equipment.

- Co-managed municipal building \$1.7 million remodel project in 2002, the exterior bicentennial project in 2007 and the 2008 Schellin Park bicentennial monument project.
- Created the full-time position of Property Maintenance inspector during 2002. Created new RT District periodic inspection program during 2013/14.
- Serve on the WC Housing Coalition representing the City of Wooster since 2003.
- Ordered and/or worked with property owners on 42 structure demolitions during a 30 month period ending during 2014 with 16 using Moving Ohio Forward funds provided by the State. Served on the county-wide MOF committee.
- Serve on the Board of Directors for Community Action Wayne Medina representing the Mayor and presently serve on the executive committee and ad hoc construction committee and chair the finance committee.
- N. Buckeye St: Served on the Howey House committee that worked in the neighborhood renovating 3 houses and demolishing two houses. Assisted Habitat for Humanity with acquiring one lot for building in this neighborhood. Worked to save the “Black” century home by relocating the owner and working to secure funding for complete renovation. Initiated the replacement of sidewalks in the area and street tree trimming and replacement.
- Began partnership with the local Homebuilders Association to provide members with code updates and education.

- Elected during a statewide election to serve as a director for the Ohio Building Officials Association.
- Awarded Building Official of the Year in 2005 by the Five County Building Officials Association representing 15 counties in NE Ohio.
- Received certification from the State of Ohio for Residential Building Department and all personnel during 2010.



# 2016 Business Activity Report

## Business Environment:

The Division maintains certification as a State Certified Building Department with Certified personnel. As such, the Division deals directly with private architects, developers, contractors, property owners and others in carrying out the mission including **200 plan reviews, issuing 1,500 permits and conducting 3,400 construction inspections and another 1,600 existing property inspections.** We also work with appointed boards such as the Design and Review Board, Board of Building and Zoning Appeals, State of Ohio Board of Building Appeals, State of Ohio Board of Building Standards and others. Also, the mission requires involvement and participation with organizations such the Wayne County Housing Authority, the Wayne County Housing Coalition, Community Action Wayne/Medina as well as various neighborhood groups and others. We address and respond to requests from the County government due to agreements to provide back-up services. Within the City we maintain a close working relationship with various divisions including Planning and Zoning, Engineering, Fire, Police, Utilities Division, PPM, Economic Development and Law.

## Construction Value Comparison last 5 years:

Year	Construction Value
2012	\$34,933,255
2013	\$45,484,208
2014	\$80,020,000 *Daisy Brand \$40 m
2015	\$63,948,625
2016	\$100,000,000* *all-time high

## ***2016 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS***

- *2016 construction activity up nearly 40% over 2015 and 2015 was also an exceptional year with the highest construction values in the last 8 years.*
- *2016 construction statistics reveal increased activity for the City higher than in any previous year.*
- *2016 saw nearly about 1,500 permits issued continuing the three year trend. During 2014 and 2015 the division issued over 1,450 permits each year.*
- *2016 was a year for many large projects to begin including: the Wooster Community Hospital expansion, two Nursing Home/Assisted Living facilities on Smithville Western and Portage, a new City Safety Center and College of Wooster science center.*

## **Top 6 projects in 2016**

1. The College of Wooster  
71,000 sq. ft. Science Center
2. The Avenue at Wooster  
100,000 sq. ft. nursing home
3. Wooster Community Hospital  
88,000 sq. ft. addition
4. LUK USA  
90,000 sq. ft. manufacturing addition
5. Danbury Woods  
65,000 sq. ft. nursing home addition
6. City of Wooster  
36,000 sq. ft. Safety Center

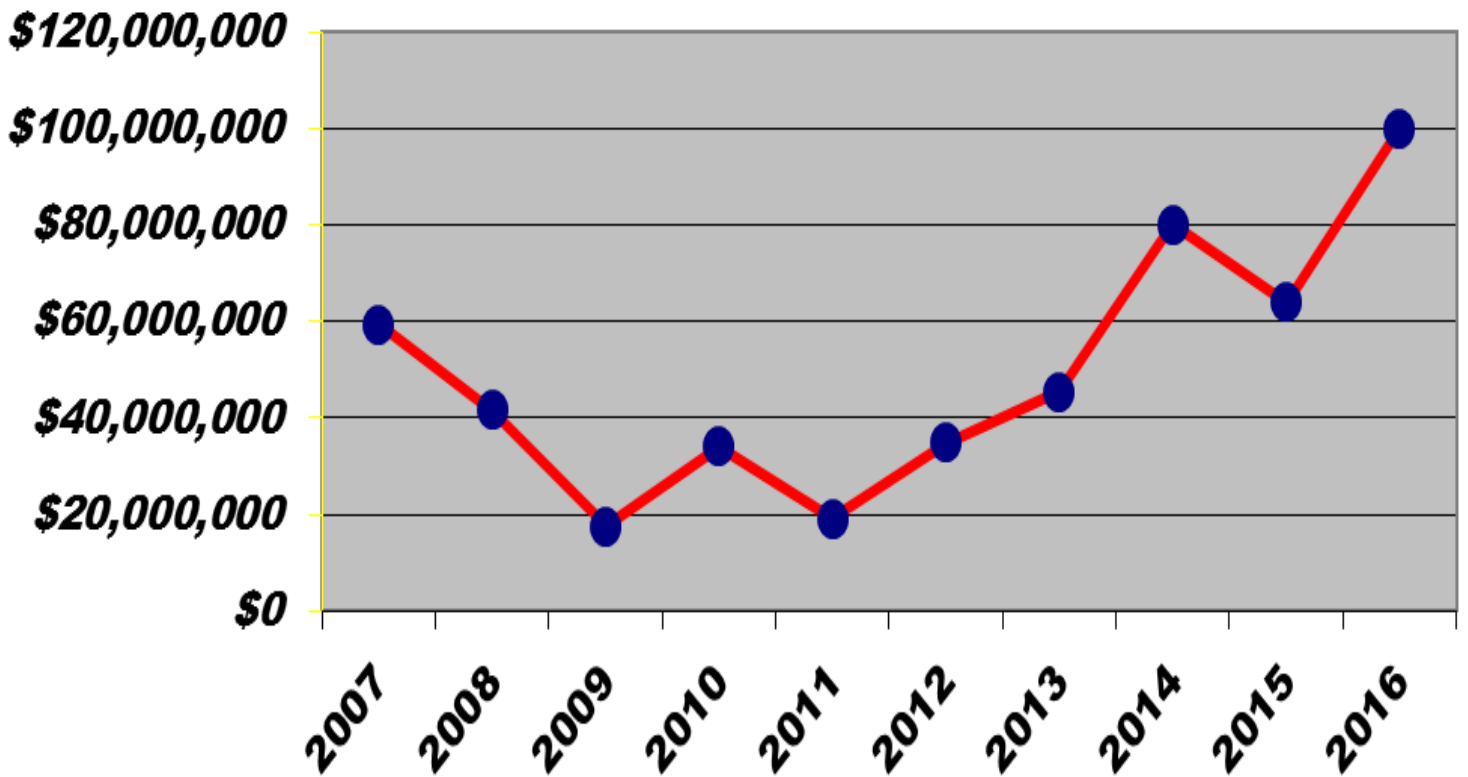
## Construction Activity Historically:

Over the years, construction in the City of Wooster has certainly had its ups and downs. Prior to 2001 construction values remained fairly constant in the \$30 - \$40 million range. The years between 2001 through 2007 saw construction activity levels peak in the City with 2005 seeing nearly double the norm with \$90 million in value.

**Last year we issued building permits on construction valued at \$100 million – a new all-time high.**

The last three years saw an increase in the number of permits annually issued to about 1,500 and fees earned were up to over \$327,000 – nearly \$50,000 higher than 2015.

## Total Value of Construction Permits

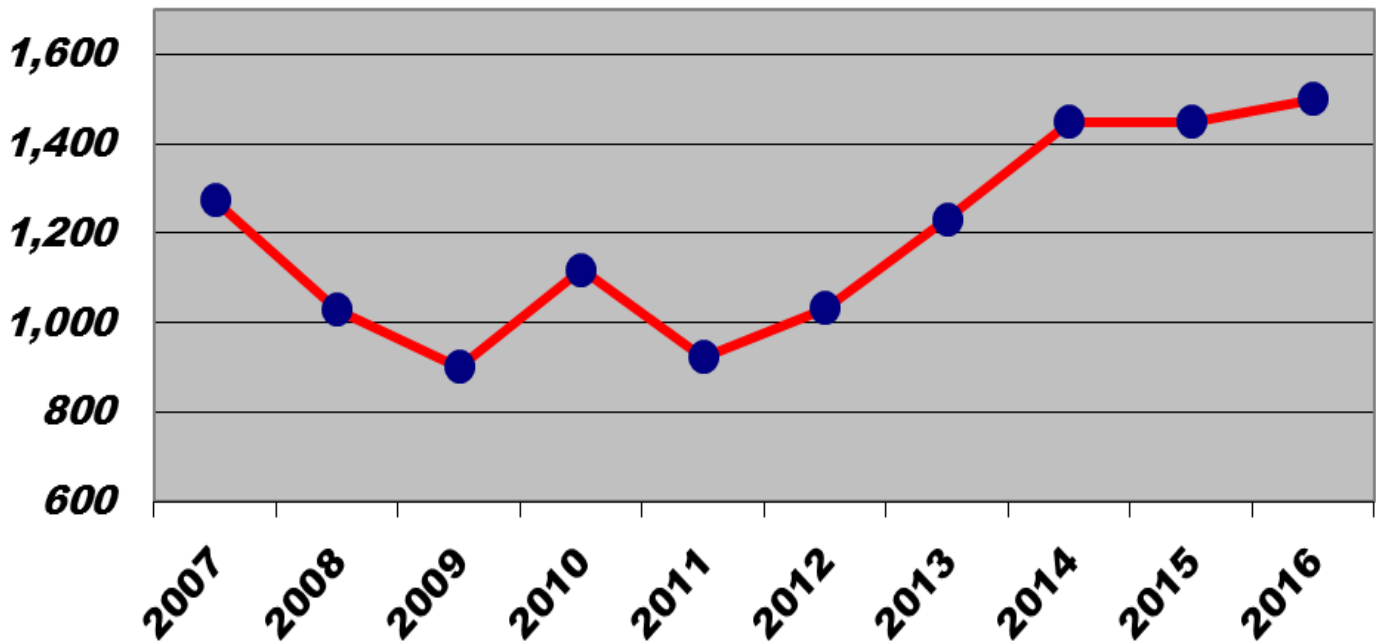


## Number of Permits Processed

Another interesting trend that has become apparent is that during the years the valuation of construction peaked (2001 - 2007), the number of permits processed by the Division peaked as expected. In the other years when the activity is in the \$30 - \$40 million range, the permitting activity went down but not as much as expected. This is indicative of the number of projects, reviews and inspections being very stable but the value of the projects being smaller. For example, smaller commercial and residential alterations, additions and repairs are performed and less new structures were built in these down years but the number of permits processed does not go down as sharply as the value of those permits.

During 2016, the Division reviewed, processed and issued nearly 1,500 permits. Permits include residential and commercial building, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, fire sprinkler and alarm permits. Included are the residential zoning permits (the division issues residential zoning permits). The last three years were record highs for permit issuance and about 25% higher than any other year.

## Number of Permits Processed



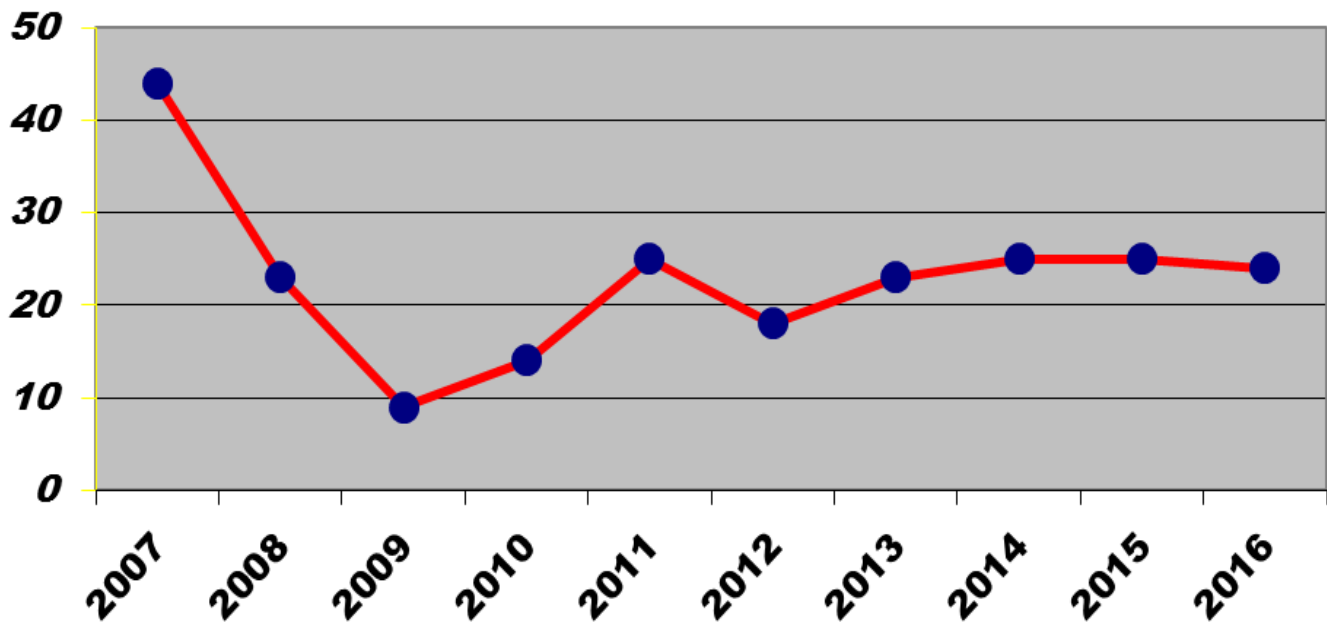
## Single Family House Construction

New single-family dwelling construction was stable in 2016 with 24 new single-family dwellings. This has been about the same for the last four years.

In contrast, housing units averaged 64 units for each of the 10 years before 2008 (1999 – 2007). This is over 3 times the average of 23 for the last 7 years (2010 – 2016). So while residential construction did mirror commercial activity in some respects, it presents a slightly different story.

Housing unit growth paralleled the growth of the North End of the City. These new subdivisions were built out at the same time as the North End developed and very few new subdivisions have been brought to the City for development. There have been only two substantial residential subdivisions in the last several years: Tartan Ridge and Crooked Creek. There are some smaller developments and scattered site lots available. It appears that 25 housing units/year has been the sustainable number in the City for the last several years. Some indicators and a market study commissioned by the City of Wooster anticipate pressure on the housing stock and a shortage of single family houses and rentals.

## Single Family Housing Units



## **Property Maintenance and Zoning Code Enforcement**

- ascetic and quality of life issues are addressed
- relationships with neighbors are preserved
- property values are maintained

*“1,576 property maintenance inspections were conducted in 2016.”*

It is clear that an effective code administration program enhances the quality of life for the residents of Wooster in many ways. To do this, the program must include effective enforcement of the maintenance and zoning codes.

Since issues are both property maintenance and zoning code violations, a single inspector handles both types of inspections. These included: tall grass, unlicensed or inoperable vehicles, rubbish and garbage, cockroaches/bedbugs and other infestations, illegal sign complaints, line of sight issues, trash out early, and parking in lawn.

## **RT Periodic Inspection Program**

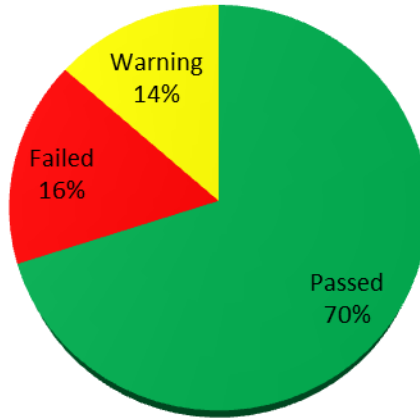
In December 2013 the City of Wooster initiated a new program of regular periodic inspections of parcels located in the R-T District (Traditional Residential). The R-T District surrounds the downtown business district and contains approximately 1,762 parcels. The majority of the homes located in this district date back to before 1935 and require increased maintenance. Inspections were performed from the right-of-way with emphasis on the exterior structure and property.

2016 saw the third year of the RT Periodic Inspection Program. This program focuses on the Traditional Residential zoning district - the residential area surrounding the downtown. Most of these houses are pre-1935 and require increased maintenance. The Division inspected every house once and some a second time in this district in the three years from 2014 – 2016. Inspections were performed from the right-of-way with emphasis on the exterior structure and property. Although regular periodic inspections are focused in the R-T District, the Division still responds to complaints throughout the city.

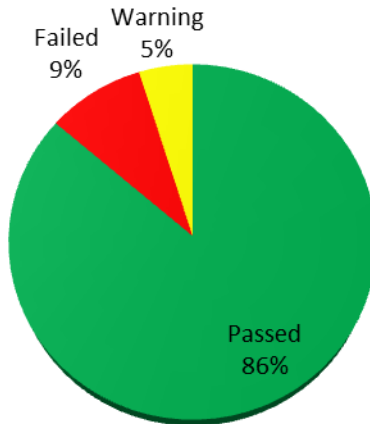


The charts below indicate the **R-T District yields more failing inspections** in comparison to other areas.

### 2013-2016 1st Round R-T Inspection Results



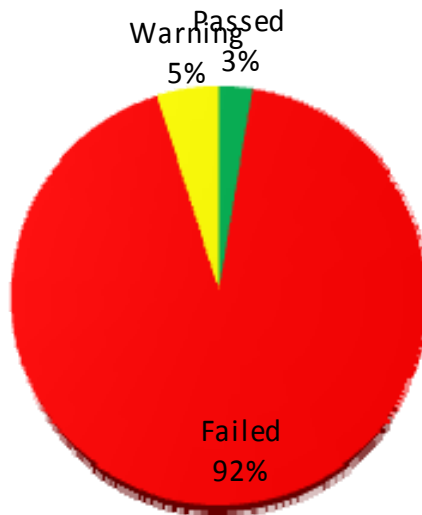
### 2016 Test Area Bowman St R2 Periodic Inspection Results



The pie chart below helps to illustrate the **high failure rate of public complaints and city identified inspections**. Public or City Initiated Complaints result in violations over **90% of the time**.

Although a **scheduled periodic inspection will result in a violation only 22% of the time**, they are effective in covering large areas and identifying violations that may go unreported.

### 2016 Public Complaint and City Identified Inspection Results

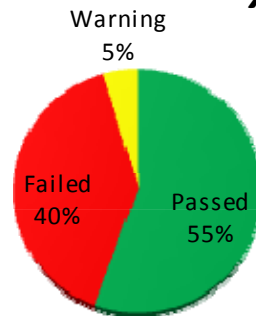


## Owner Occupied vs Rental Property in the RT District

The pie charts below indicate that in 2016 rental properties appeared to have a higher inspection failure rate. The first chart shows owner occupied properties while the second shows rental properties. Approximately 60% of the properties in the R-T District are rental. **There is a difference in condition based on ownership as about 40% owner occupied properties failed the initial inspection compared to 60% of the rental properties.**

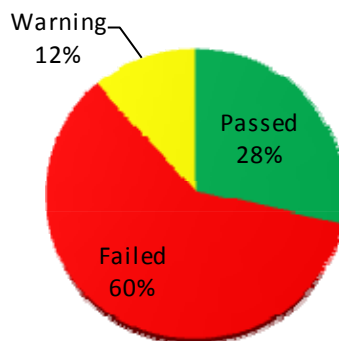
### 2016 - Owner Occupied Initial Inspection Results

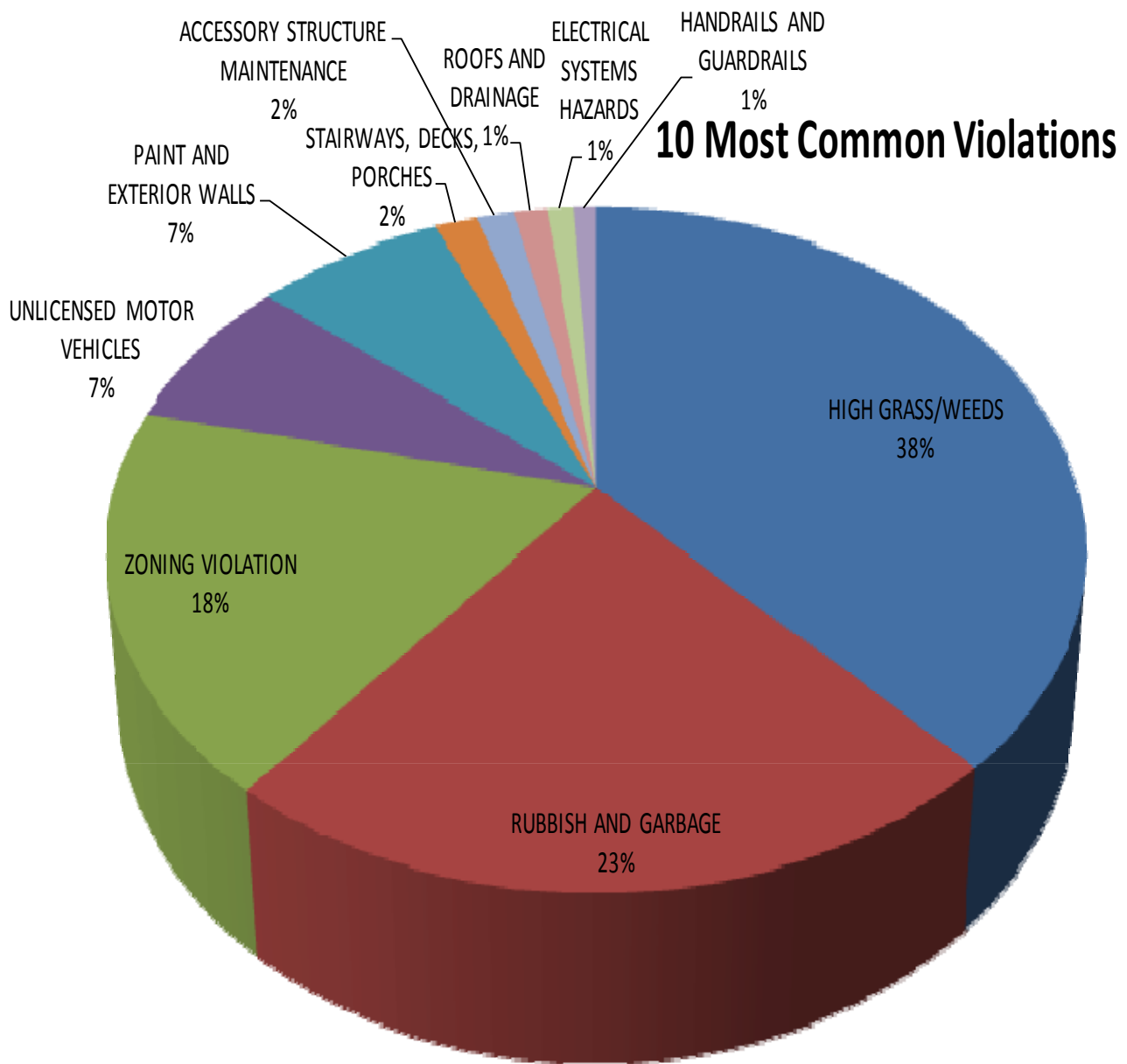
*(occupancy status is estimated based on property tax data and may not be exact)*



### 2016 - Rental Initial Inspection Results

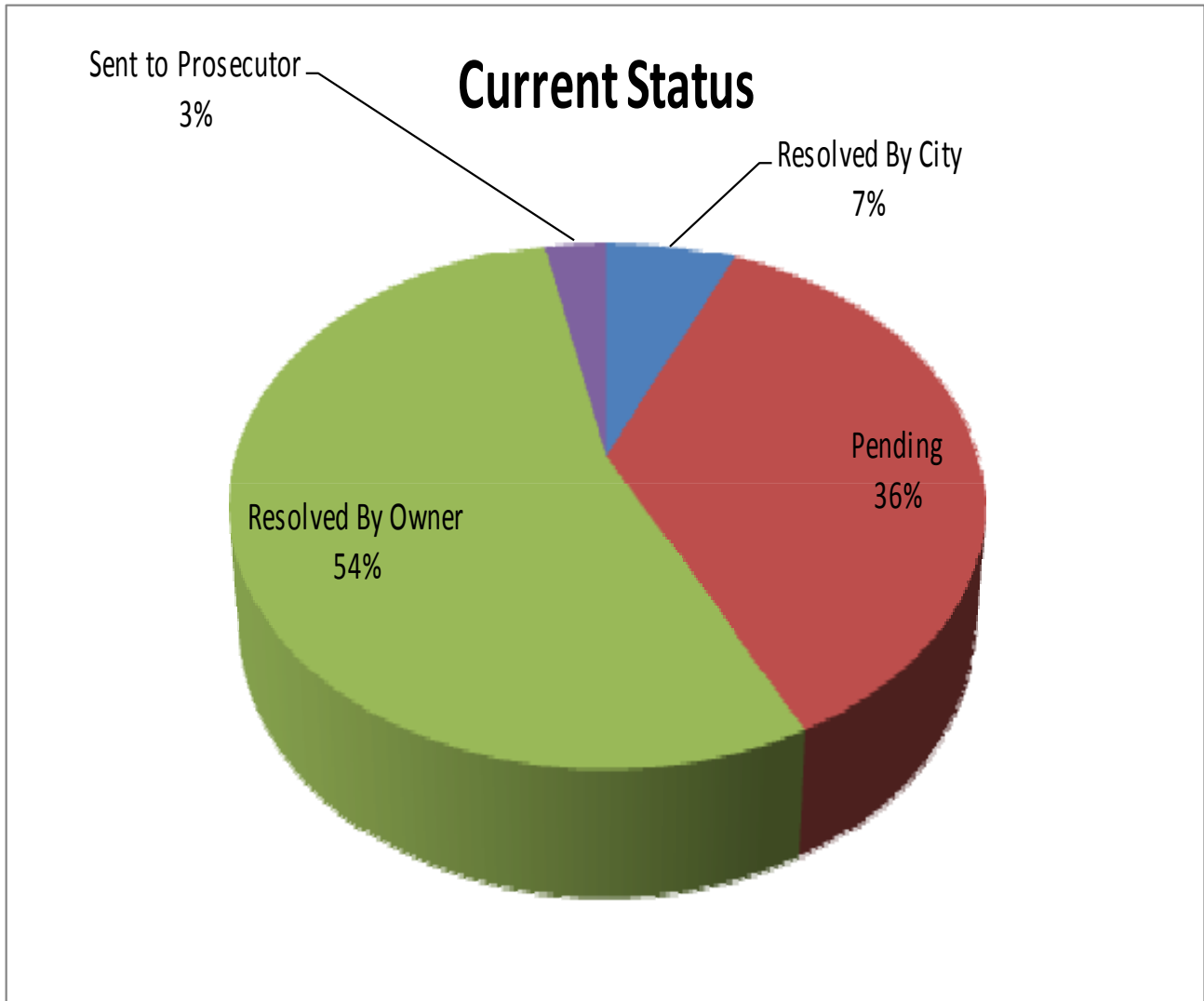
*(occupancy status is estimated based on property tax data and may not be exact)*



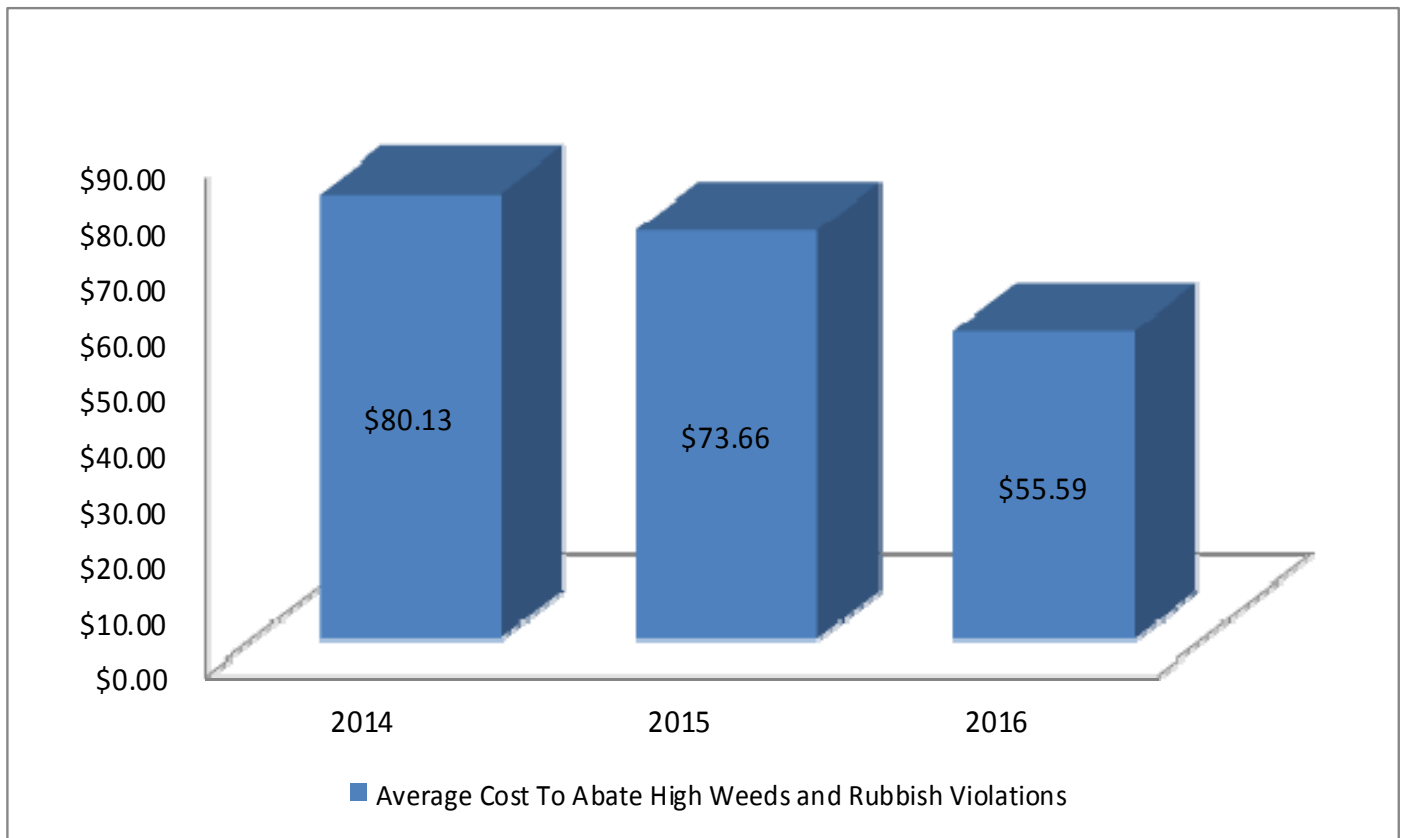


## Resolution of Violations

This chart highlights the majority of violations are resolved by the property owner through voluntary compliance.



This chart illustrates over the past 3 years the **average cost to abate a property maintenance nuisance violation has steadily decreased.** The Division utilized different contractors to obtain the most competitive pricing.



**407 E. South St. Demo of a problem property.**



## **Floodplain Administration**

Flooding has been a notorious cause of damage and life loss in the United States, with an average annual damage cost of \$6 billion and loss of 140 people. A flood is any collection of water on what is normally dry land. Floods can occur due to heavy rain, snow melt, or a body of water overflowing, among other causes. The people and places affected by flooding are generally located in what is referred to as the floodplain.

Since standard homeowners insurance doesn't cover flooding, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) offers flood insurance to homeowners, renters and business owners if their community participates in the program. Participating communities agree to enforce and adopt ordinances that meet FEMA requirements to reduce the risk of flooding. In the spring of 2007, the City began participating in the National Flood Insurance Program with the adoption of the Flood Damage Reduction Ordinances. As if on cue, the City experienced a 100 year flood event in 2009 and another one in 2010. The NFIP standard for floodplain management is based on the 100-Year Flood. This is a flood event that has a 1 percent chance of occurring in any given year. A 100-Year Flood would cause great destruction, including large monetary losses and loss of lives. An even greater flood is called the 500-Year Flood, which has a 0.2 percent chance of occurring every year. The last 500-Year Flood occurred in Wayne County on July 4, 1969, causing \$17,000,000 in damages and claiming the lives of 21 people

On average, the City will issue 3 permits per year in the floodplain. Projects in the floodplain are required to build to higher standards including: dry-flood proofing, raising the elevation of the lowest floor or other flood resistant methods. By limiting activity in these areas, flood damage risks are properly managed.

**During 2016, the division did over 20 flood plain reviews along with assisting property owners determine the base flood elevation of their properties.**



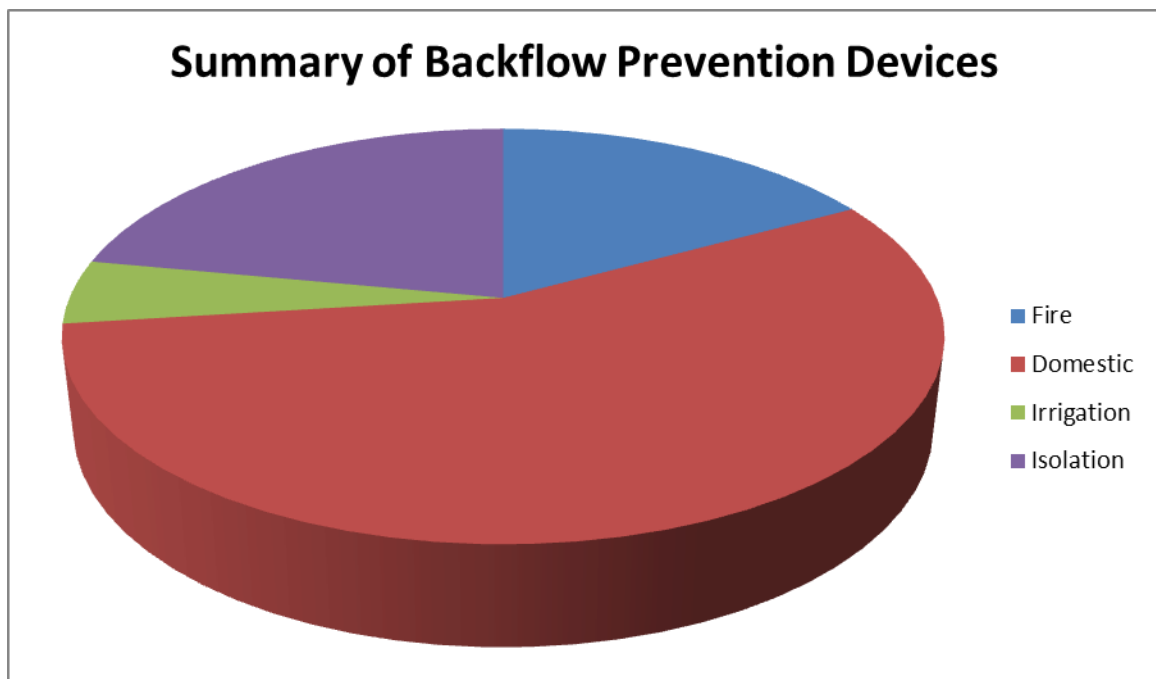
## **Grease Trap Installation and Maintenance**

The discharge of organic grease into the Sewer System has become an important issue in the City. When organic grease solidifies in the sewer mains, it entraps solids and forms a hard deposit that decreases capacity or causes a blockage, creating system overflows or backups that damage user's property. Additionally, this unnecessarily adds organic load to the treatment plant. In an effort to address this problem, our plumbing inspector enforces standards for new grease trap installation and assists the pretreatment coordinator in policing restaurant grease trap maintenance.

## **Backflow Valve Program**

Backflow can be described as “a reversal of the normal direction of flow within a piping system” or the flow of water or other liquids, mixtures or substances into the distribution pipes of a potable water supply from any source other than the intended source of the potable water supply. What it means to our customers is that once the potable water passes through the water meter into a facility, premise or home it is uncontaminated from other users and the backflow device will protect all other users from that water supply. While backflow and cross connections (an arrangement whereby backflow can occur) are not new they are most recently covered by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under sections 3745 – 3795 of the Ohio Administrative Code and the City's Utility Ordinances. Under these ordinances, commercial and industrial facilities are in need of an approved backflow device, also some residential site's may be required to have some sort of protection based on use (for example a residential irrigations system). A survey/plan review is done for all new water connections and may be conducted at an existing site by the Program Coordinator (Scott Davis) at his discretion. Devices may be required based on this survey.

During 2016, the **Division tracked the testing of 1,625 devices** using the City's online tracking system. The Division also conducted surveys and site visits to eliminate potential sources of cross-contamination. Additionally the Division provided enforcement of the required testing of isolation devices and assisted in the enforcement of the EPA mandated installation and testing of containment devices.



## **Facilities Management**

The Division acts as the facility manager for City Hall. Supervising the janitorial and service contracts for the building, providing maintenance and day to day oversight are part of the responsibilities.



## Staff Development

***“What motivates the staff is the realization that building safety is something vital to all who work in buildings, send their kids to school or shop at the local grocery store – we often just take building safety for granted.”***

In code administration, the terrain is continually changing. New codes and standards such as the energy conservation code are adopted. In addition, new methods, materials and technologies become available.

The training and skills necessary to be a good construction inspector do not come quickly or easily. One must work very hard to gain an acceptable level of expertise in various construction related areas, and be very diligent about staying proficient. Building Division staff is expected to go beyond what is required, and to do whatever is necessary to serve the customer, provide solutions and at the same time get code compliance. What motivates the staff is the realization that building safety is something vital to all who work in buildings, send their kids to school or shop at the local grocery store – we take building safety for granted.

During 2016 the staff attended their State Educational Conferences for their respective disciplines to obtain the State mandated training. Additionally, staff receives local monthly training with their involvement in the Five County Building Officials Association, Ohio Building Officials Association, Ohio Plumbing Inspectors Organization and Ohio Electrical Inspectors Organization. This continuing education makes the difference between mediocre and excellent inspectors.

# 2016 Fiscal Activity Report

***“The Division works hard to be fiscally conservative, accountable, and transparent while striving for continuous improvement.”***

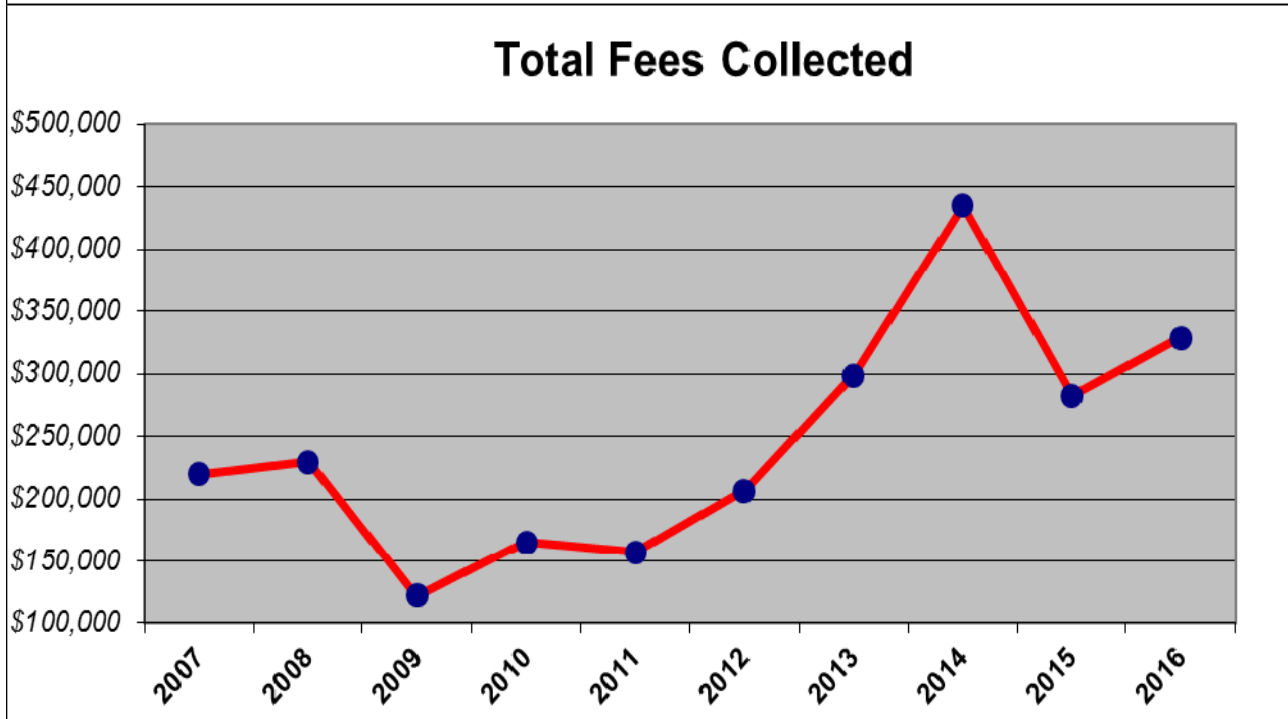
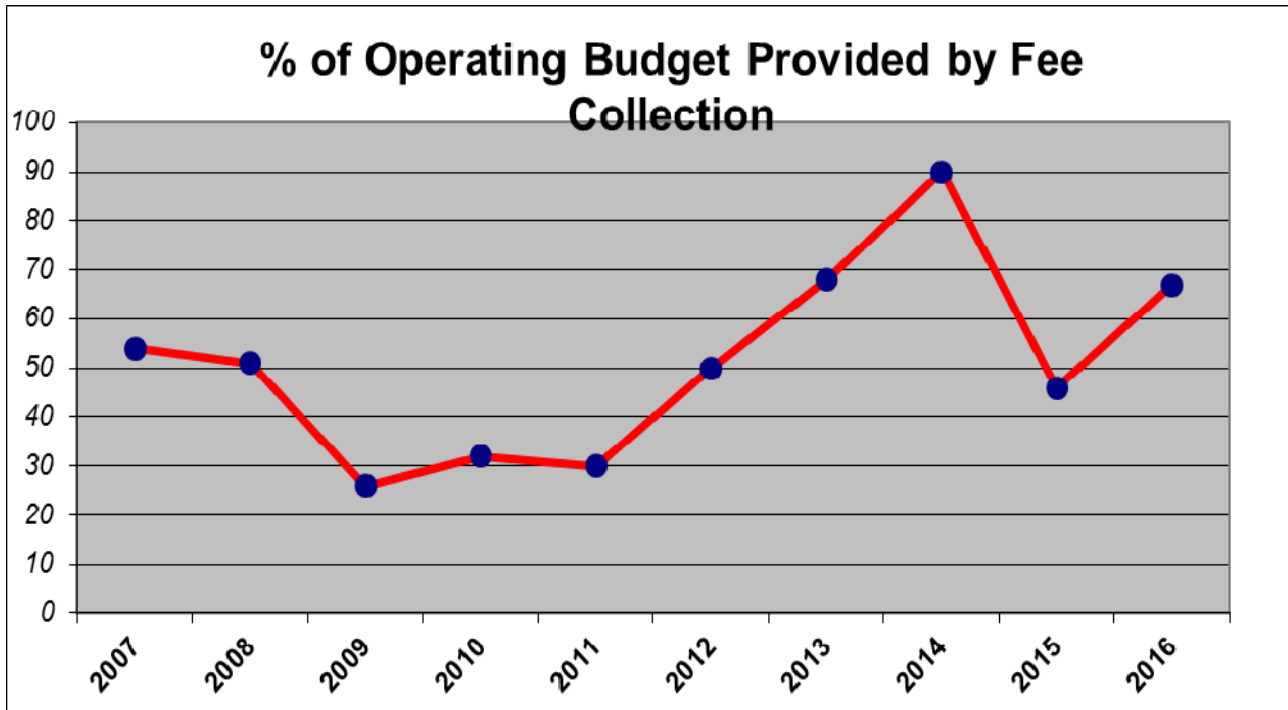
## **Fiscal Environment**

The Building Standards Division is not an Enterprise Fund but rather funded primarily by the general fund; however, a significant part of the budget is covered by user fees (developers/contractors).

It makes sense for specific users to pay for services received, however since some of the work of the division is unrelated to construction inspection user fees cannot account for all of the Division’s expenses. For example, the division enforces the property maintenance code, some general city ordinances, the backflow valve program, safety inspections and others. These inspections should not be subsidized by developer’s fees but rather the general fund as it benefits the City as a whole.

- ***\$328,000 in fees***
- ***Fees represent 67% of budget expenses***

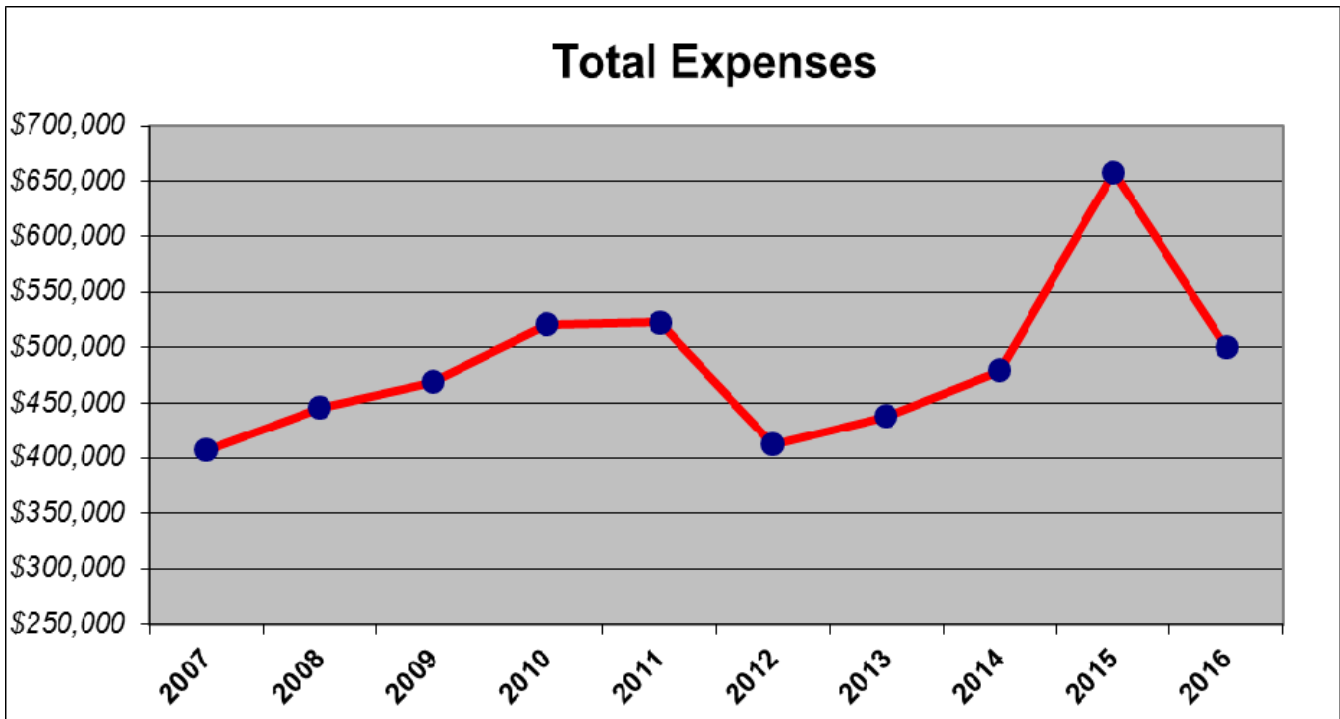
The general mix is: 60% user fees and 40% general fund. This mix is part of a revenue policy developed by the Division and Administration and is reviewed periodically. **In 2016 fees accounted for 67% of the operating budget. Reflected in this percentage is additional demolitions and property maintenance abatement approved by Council and this increased enforcement brings the percentage down.**



## Expenses and the Budget

After averaging about \$400,000 from 2002 – 2007, expenses began an upward trend. This continued into 2009 – 2011 as the Building Standards Division and the Planning and Zoning Divisions were merged and reflected the added expenses of that Division. In 2011, one employee from the Building Standards Division was eliminated and for 2012, the Planning and Zoning Division functioned as a stand-alone division with a separate budget. This gave a more accurate picture of the expenses for the Building Standards Division. With one less employee and other cost savings measures, the expenses were back down to 2002 levels. Expenses were down to 10 year old levels in 2012 and remained in at this level during 2013 rising only slightly. With the addition of a new full-time property maintenance inspector late in 2013, this caused a slight rise in expenses. This was fully realized during 2014 as the inspector worked the entire year. 2015 saw this same level of funding with no major increase.

2016 saw no major increase. However, expenses are increased as property maintenance abatement increases. For example, during 2015 the Larwill clean-up was over \$111,000 and another \$50,000 in demolitions was expended over the normal year. 2016 also saw increased demolitions but not to 2015 levels and that is reflected in the chart below.



***“The City of Wooster Building Standards Division remains committed to our mission, and looks forward to embracing the challenges that 2017 may bring.”***

Respectfully submitted by:  
Tim Monea, Chief Building Official